

Message Text

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY GUATEMALA IMMEDIATE

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 090347

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: CASC, MX

SUBJECT: PRISONER SERVICES: "AMERICAN ESCAPE COMMITTEE"

1. ON APRIL 8 AND 9, METROMEDIA TV NEWS CARRIED FILM REPORTS OF AN INTERVIEW BETWEEN A REPORTER AND A MASKED MAN WHO ANNOUNCED THE FORMATION OF "THE AMERICAN ESCAPE COMMITTEE." THIS ORGANIZATION, ACCORDING TO THE UNIDENTIFIED SPOKESMAN, IS ESTABLISHED TO FREE AMERICANS NOW HELD IN MEXICAN PRISONS BY VIOLENCE, INCLUDING TERRORISM. DURING THE APRIL 9 INTERVIEW, THE PRISONS AT HERMOSILLO AND MAZATLAN WERE NAMED AS THE EASIEST TARGETS. THE COMMITTEE MAY HAVE BEEN RESPONSIBLE FOR THE ASSAULT ON THE PRISON AT PIEDRAS NEGRAS MARCH 11 WHICH FREED ELEVEN AMERICANS (MEXICO HAS INDICATED THAT THE EXTRADITION OF THESE AMERICANS IS DESIRED). THE AMERICAN ESCAPE COMMITTEE HAS OBTAINED MUCH PUBLICITY HERE AND IN MEXICO. AS A RESULT LECUMBERRI PRISON IN MEXICO CITY HAS BEEN HEAVILY REINFORCED WITH ARMED GUARDS AND OUR CONSULATE AT NUEVO LAREDO REPORTED NEW SECURITY MEASURES AT THE PRISON THERE.

2. METROMEDIA NEWSMAN CHUCK ASHMAN ARRIVING GUATEMALA TONIGHT TO CONDUCT FURTHER INTERVIEWS WITH ESCAPE COMMITTEE

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TEE WHICH IS BELIEVED TO HAVE TRANSFERRED HEADQUARTERS TO

GUATEMALA EMBASSY AUTHORIZED INFORM GOG REPORTED EXISTENCE

ESCAPE COMMITTEE IN GUATEMALA BUT DO NOT REPEAT NOT REVEAL
PRESENCE OF ASHMAN UNTIL HE HAS SAFELY DEPARTED COUNTRY
AS ASSIGNMENT INVOLVES EXTREME PERSONAL RISK TO HIM. KISSINGER

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